

THE BOSTON INFORMER

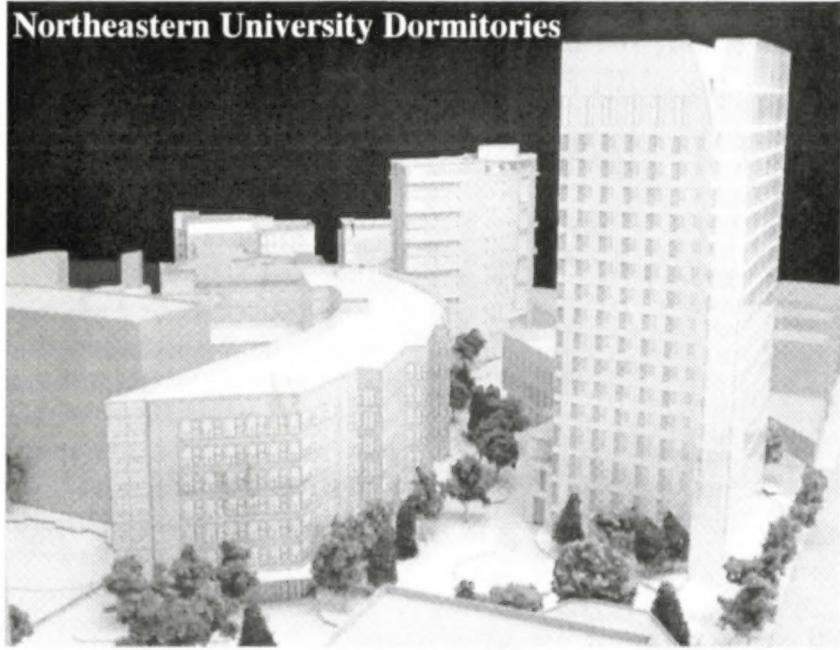
No. 54

For people who care about Boston

March 2002

**"If it is not being built by a university, hospital or other institution,
it is not getting built."* — Boston Globe columnist Steve Bailey**

Northeastern University Dormitories



Boston University plans to demolish the 86-year-old Commonwealth Armory on Commonwealth Avenue in Allston and build a 1,500-bed apartment-style dormitory, 6,100-seat arena, new recreation center, a 1,000-space parking area. Phase 1, the arena, recreation center and parking, have been approved by the Boston Civic Design Commission. Phase 2—the dormitory—was not approved, and Boston University has been asked to revise the plans because it was feared that the proposed buildings would create a wall between the river and the city. Phase 1 is planned to start this year; Phase 2, in 2005.

Massachusetts General Hospital has started work on building a new 466,700 s.f. ambulatory care center. A portion of the historic Charles Street Jail has been removed as part of the project that includes a six-story underground parking garage. The jail will eventually be converted to a 300-room luxury hotel. The project should be complete by 2004.

Emerson College hired The Stubbins Associates to design its newest dormitory on Boylston Street across from the Boston Common. The 14-story, 185,000 s.f. dormitory will also have three levels below grade and will include space for student activities, recreation and intercollegiate sports.

The dormitory is the second new structure built by the College, which broke ground last fall on a new performance center. The Tufts Performance and Production Center, an 11-story, 80,000 s.f. building next to the Emerson Majestic Theatre on Tremont Street in the Theater District, was designed by Elkus/Manfredi Ltd. When completed in 2003, the entrance to the Center will be from Boylston Place near the Transportation Building.

* Almost.

Northeastern University continues to build dormitories. Since fall 2000, Northeastern has added close to 1,800 beds in five buildings and is scheduled to open a sixth dormitory this summer for another 290 beds. The University's goal is to be able to house 6,500 students—about one-half of its undergraduates—on-campus.

To help accomplish this, two new dorms with classroom space will be built at Huntington Avenue/Parker Street. **West Village Residence G**, seven stories high, will provide approximately 340 beds and four classrooms. **West Village Residence H**, which will front on Huntington Avenue and Parker Street, will have a 16-story portion and a low-rise, three-story, section. The College of Computer Science will occupy the low-rise building and part of the high-rise; 47 apartment-style units with 190 beds will occupy 12 stories in the high-rise.

Construction is set to begin in late spring 2002 and be complete in summer 2004. Architect: William Rawn Associates.

Source: William Rawn Associates Architects, Inc.

Suffolk University's new Beacon Hill dorm is underway. Construction activities for Suffolk's 19-story dormitory at 10 Somerset St. have begun the last week of February. The 182-foot-high dormitory will be built on the site of a 38-space parking lot across from One Beacon Street and will house up to 368 students. The \$40 million project, designed by Cannon Design, will include food service, recreation and study rooms and a central atrium/common area. The dormitory is scheduled to be complete in August 2003.

Museum of Fine Arts' master plan describes a major renovation and expansion that it hopes to begin in 2003. The first phase involves demolishing the existing east wing and building a new wing for American and contemporary art, an auditorium, and restaurant. The plan includes landscaping, climate control and refurbished European art galleries. The Fraser Court will have a glass roof. The second phase involves expansion of the west wing with a new building for conservation, curator, and storage, an underground garage and second glassed-over courtyard. The Museum hopes to raise \$425 million for the project. Architect: Sir Norman Foster.

Northeastern University and SquashBusters have created a partnership to build a squash and fitness center adjacent to Northeastern's parking garage on Columbus Avenue in Lower Roxbury. The three-story, 26,000 s.f. building will provide administrative offices and meeting rooms on the first floor and eight squash courts, multi-purpose rooms, classrooms and Northeastern's locker rooms and saunas on the second and third floors. Northeastern students, faculty and staff will share the facilities with SquashBusters, a non-profit organization that teaches squash to Boston youth and provides mentors and assistance with academics. Construction should begin in spring 2002 and be complete in spring 2003. Architect: CBT.

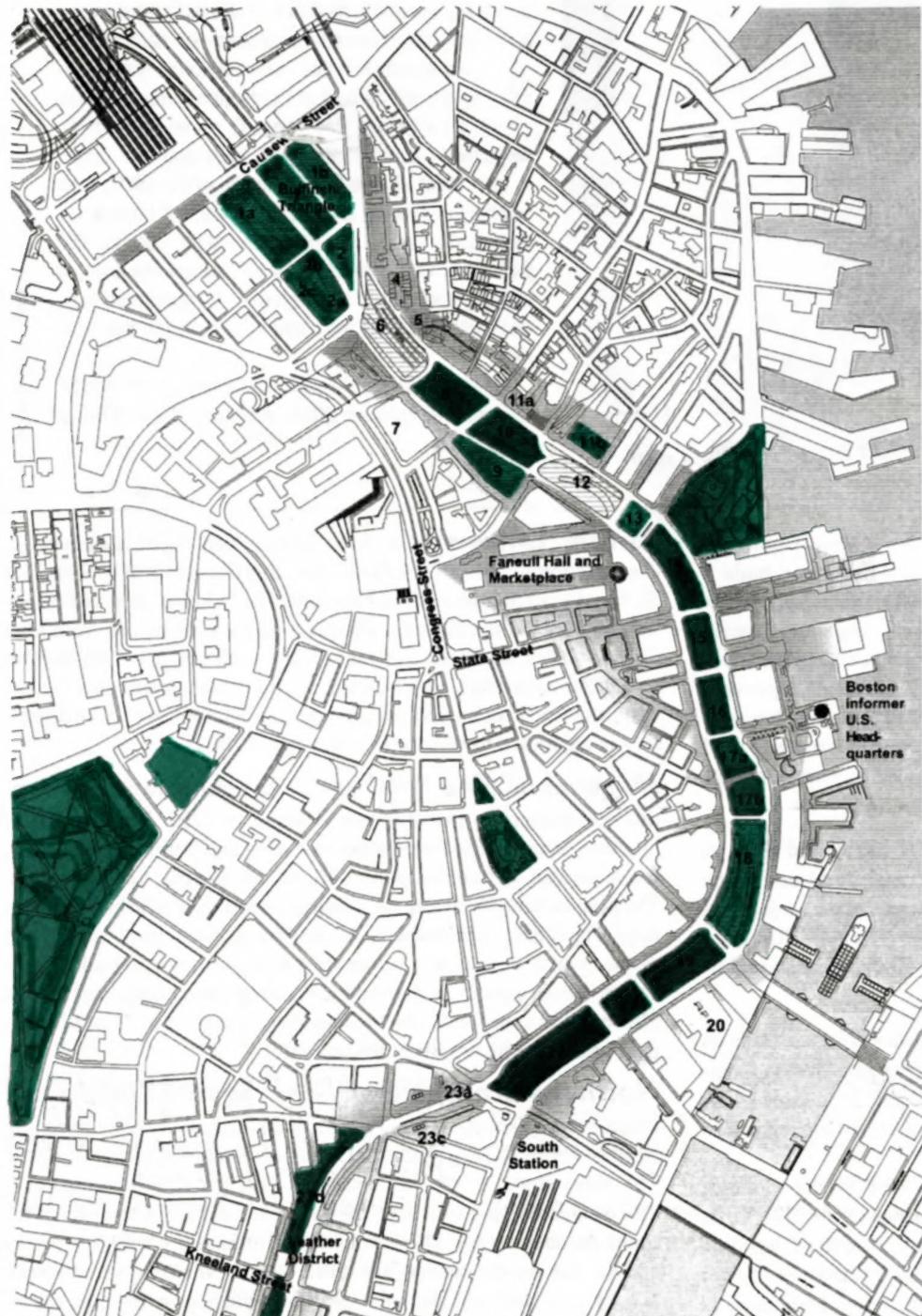
Update: The Central Artery/Tunnel Project (aka, the Big Dig, the Big Pig, and the CA/T)

Background

Boston's green eyesore has been a problem from a visual as well as functional point of view since it was built. In fact, discussions about what to do with the overhead Central Artery—including putting it underground—began almost as soon as it was completed in 1959.

By 1985 an Environmental Impact Statement had been prepared and a Third Harbor Tunnel had been added (at one point it had been decided to do only the tunnel). Federal and state fund approvals were obtained by 1991. The initial cost was estimated to be \$2.5 billion (90 percent federally funded)

What's Up: Planning the Surface Artery



Source: Central Artery/Tunnel Project

Green denotes existing or planned open space.

and completion date was 1998.

The original plan was to build the Third Harbor Tunnel and connect it to the Southeast Expressway and Masspike extension before starting work on the mainline Central Artery. This would divert approximately one-third of Artery traffic to the new tunnel, relieving congestion on the Artery during construction.

Also to relieve congestion, a number of MBTA improvements were to be made including expanding Blue Line stations to take six-car trains before construction started. This will now be completed after Artery work is finished.

The 16-lane Scheme Z was rejected, but the push for a tunnel under the Charles River, instead of bridges with a minimum of 14 lanes, was also rejected.

Current Status

The project is more than 70 percent complete with demolition of the overhead Artery to start in some areas in 2003. The Ted Williams Tunnel should be connected to the Masspike and Southeast Expressway by 2003 with demolition of the overhead Artery to be complete by 2005. The cost is estimated at \$14.5 billion (and rising) with the federal government paying no more than \$8.6 billion. Responsibility for running the project was transferred from the Mass. Highway Department to Masspike with a Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff (B/PB) joint venture as engineering and management providers.

There are still serious problems with financing, engineering management and quality assurance.

Financing—The official cost estimate is now \$14.5 billion, but it could rise to \$15 billion–\$16 billion before completion. The federal government has capped its contribution at \$8.6 billion. The state portion is being financed by a variety of devices including long-term bonds and contributions from Massport and Masspike.

The ability of Masspike to pay for its allotted share has become a major controversy over whether or not tolls should be continually increased on the Turnpike and the tunnels, penalizing one group of commuters who may not use the Artery, over the actual recipients of the benefits (I-93

commuters). Another solution proposed is to increase the gas tax by about 3 cents per gallon.



Engineering Management and Quality Assurance—The B/PB joint venture has been under heavy criticism for its management of the project. Not only did the costs get out of control—B/PB's original cost estimate was \$5 billion—but there have been major engineering problems which delayed the project by at least six months. These have included:

- flooding and leaks under the tunnel sections in the Fort Point Channel;
- construction quality problems that were neglected for long periods, such as the substandard concrete on the Zakim Bridge over the Charles River, which seems to have been ignored for two years; and
- defective ventilation system in the Ted Williams Tunnel, which has not been repaired since the opening in 1995.

B/PB was also criticized by consultants Deloitte and Touche for allowing contractor overrun claims without adequate documentation. Some members of the previous Masspike Board were pressing B/PB to refund some of its estimated \$2 billion in fees as compensation. They were since fired by Acting Governor Swift for not implementing a toll hike. The previous Board also proposed hiring an "owner representative" to oversee B/PB.

Planning the Surface Artery

For the past 15 years there have been endless meetings and discussions about what to do with the new 30 acres of land freed when the Artery is demolished.

There have been three defining milestones:

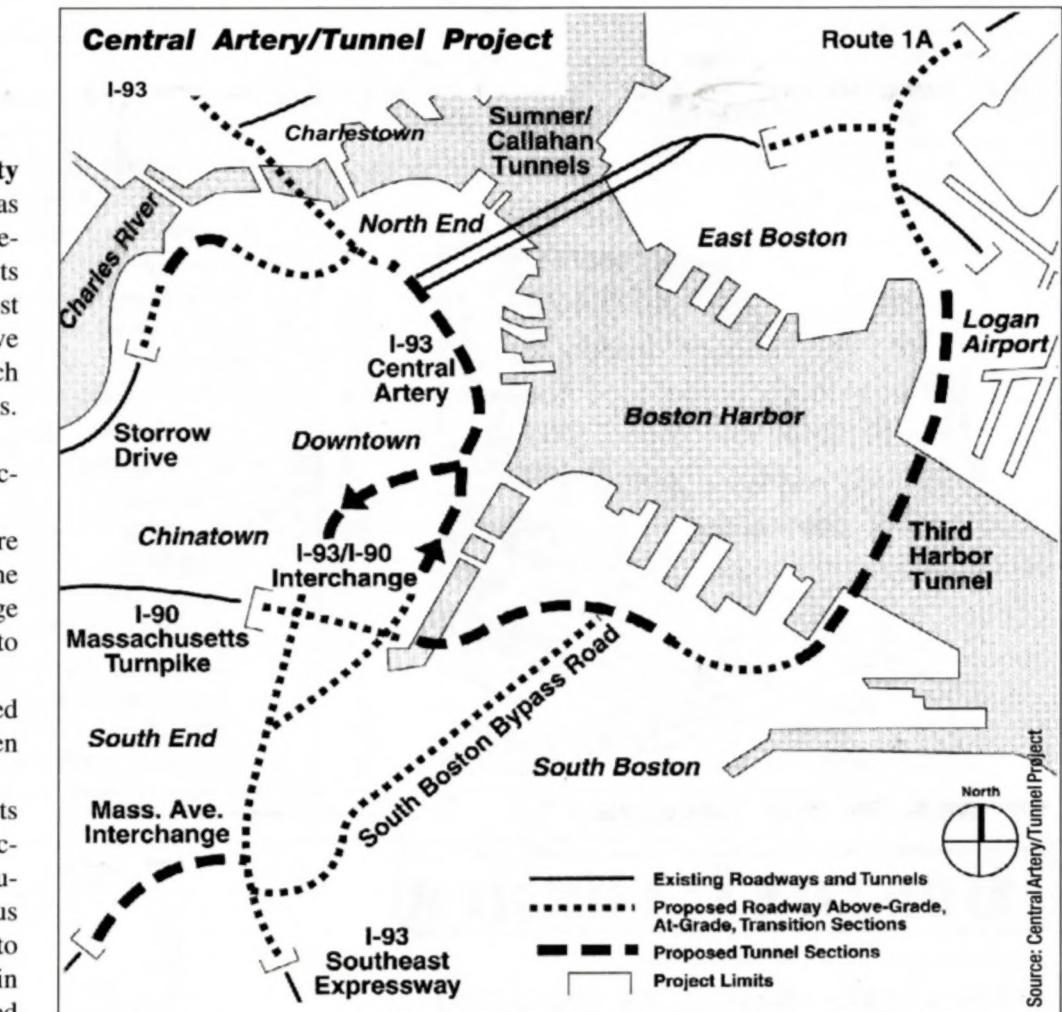
• the Boston 2000 plan developed by the

- BRA in 1991;
- the MEPA Certificate by Secretary DeVillars, also in 1991, calling for 75 percent open space; and
- the Surface Transportation Action Forum plans in the mid-1990s defining the roads, parcel edges, etc.

Since then Masspike, which currently controls the process for the open spaces, commissioned a Master Plan which was completed in 2001 by SMWM of San Fran-

Currently, the most publicly active group is the Mayor's Central Artery Completion Task Force, which was recently designated as the Citizens Advisory Committee under the Mass. Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). The present 34-member group represents the "tripartite development process"—state, city, and community—called for in the MEPA process.

The Task Force plans to establish Neighborhood Advisory Committees in Down-



isco with local firms The Cecil Group and Halvorson Company.

A 12-member legislative commission (three members each appointed by the Governor, Senate President, Speaker of the House, and Mayor of Boston) was formed to develop recommendations for future corridor ownership, governance, funding, maintenance, etc. by December 31, 2000. To date it has been unable to agree on a final recommendation. ♦

town North, North End (already established), Wharf District, Financial District/Dewey Square and Leather District/Chinatown. All Task Force and Advisory Committee meetings are public.

Masspike plans to follow the 2001 Master Plan when it hires final designers for the North, Central and South areas of the corridor. Requests for Proposal will be issued this year. ♦

Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The **Boston Informer** is published by ATC Information, Inc., six times yearly in Boston, Massachusetts. President: Anthony Casendino; vice-presidents, Ann McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

The **Boston Informer** is available by mail only. \$25.00 per year (cheap!). Questions? Telephone (617) 723-7030, fax (617) 437-1886.

People Movers

Matthew Amorello, from MassHighway commissioner to Masspike chairman.

Kevin Sullivan, from transportation secretary to secretary of administration and finance.

Stephen Crosby, from secretary of administration and finance to chief of staff for Acting Governor Swift.

John Moscardelli, former prosecutor and BRA Board member to Masspike Board of Directors (part-time).

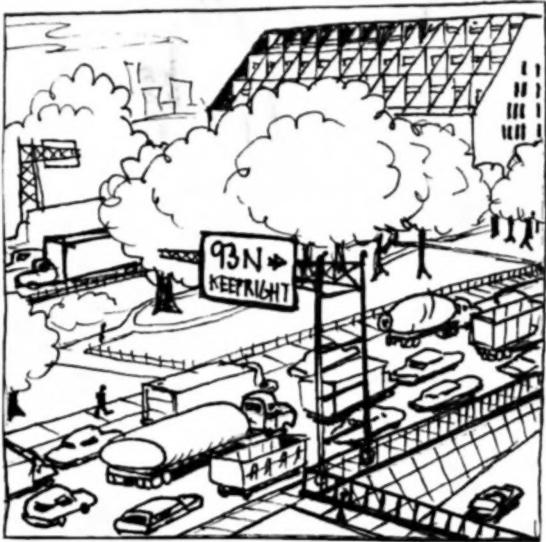
Nicholas Lopardo, former chief executive of State Street Global Advisors to Masspike Board of Directors (part-time).

Michael Mulhern, from acting MBTA general manager to general manager.

James Scanlan is the acting state transportation secretary and MBTA chairman.

Erik Scheier, from SYSTRA Consulting to project director for operations at the MBTA.

Surface Artery, 2005...



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Parcel 16 "open space"

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You Were Asking

Q. It has been estimated that the cost of operating and maintaining the new Central Artery underground and the Ted Williams Tunnel could be \$100 million per year. Where is this money coming from?

A. Nobody seems to know. Total annual revenues for Masspike, owners and operators of the system, are currently only \$120 million per year.

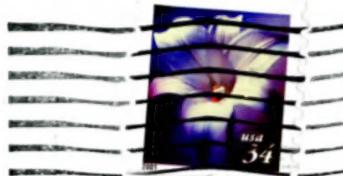
Q. I was re-reading **The Boston Informer** issue from 1997 that said the Green Line at North Station would be relocated underground and the elevated tracks removed in 2002. Will the new station be open soon or closer to the end of this year?

A. Actually, due to delays, it'll be more like late 2004.

Q. Fred Salvucci, "father of the Big Dig," has always maintained that unless the MBTA upgrades its system so people would prefer to ride than drive, the Big Dig project will be a traffic failure. Congestion at the today's level would be back in five years. Salvucci repeated this at a recent Move Mass meeting. Has the MBTA done this?

A. No. Despite expanding commuter rail, the bus and rapid transit system has fallen behind, especially compared to other U. S. and foreign systems. Planned improvements called for as Big Dig mitigation are hopelessly behind schedule. For example:

- Washington Street Replacement ("Silver Line" bus) original date: 1994; current date: 2002.
- South Boston Transitway: original date: 1998; current date: 2004.
- Blue Line platform extension and modernization original date: 1998; current date: 2008.
- Orange Line cars and new signal system original date: 1995; current date: 2004.



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